

Qualitative research interviewing as a method to explore local music collecting and collections in Canada

Saskatchewan Library Association, May 2, 2019

Carolyn Doi, University of Saskatchewan
Kaitlyn Grant, University of Alberta



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Outline

1. Local Music Collecting & Collections in Canada: project overview
2. Qualitative Research Interviewing: an overview
3. Planning
4. Data Collection
5. Analysis & results
6. Takeaways & next steps

Local Music Collecting & Collections in Canada: Project Overview



Sounds of Home: Exploring Local Music Collections and Collecting in Canada

Explores the connection between **music** and **place** through experiences of local music collection managers in Canadian heritage organizations

Research team



Carolyn Doi, Principle Investigator



Sean Luyk, Co-investigator



Kaitlyn Grant, Research Assistant

Areas of research

Music Scenes

- Popular music studies approach
- considers local music as documentary evidence of broader cultural formations

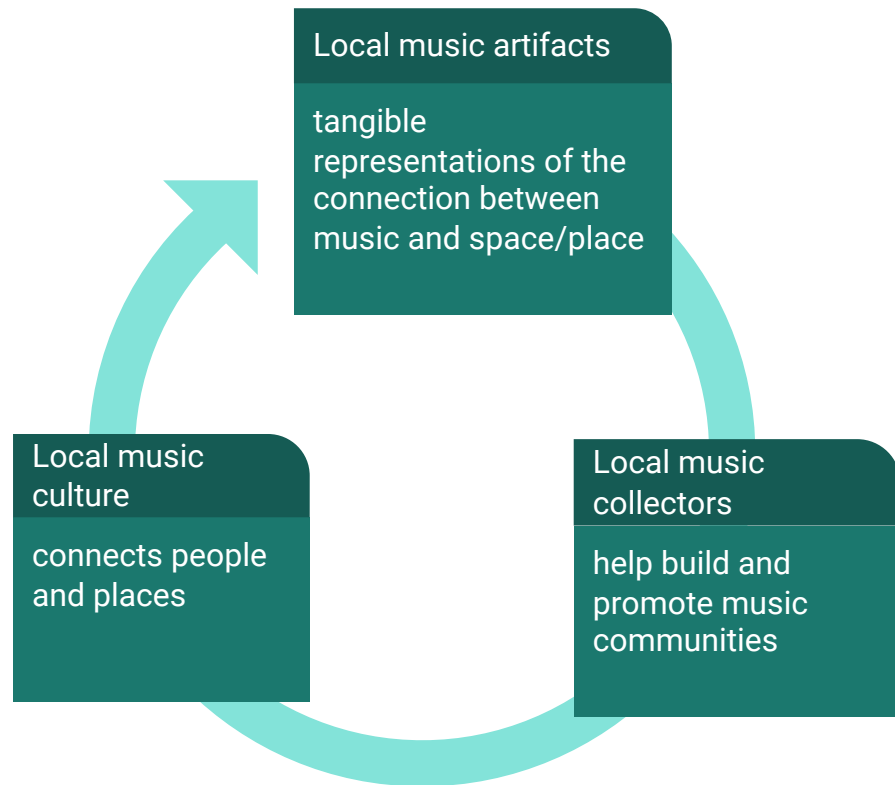
Special Collections

- library / archival sciences
- speaks to the value of collecting and documenting rare or unique artifacts

Project purpose

1. Understand the values, lived experiences, and perceptions of local music collection managers in Canadian cultural heritage organizations
2. Gather diverse perspectives on local music collecting, collections, and their impact on communities

Local Music in Cultural Heritage Institutions



Method: Qualitative interviewing

- Aiming for 30 participants (about 2/3 complete)
- Qualitative research interviews
- Semi-structured interview guide approach
- Questions focus is on value and significance of collecting local music from their perspective
- Photo documentation and site visits

Method: Qualitative Research Interviewing



What is qualitative interviewing?

- Interactional exchange of dialogue
- Informal style
- Thematic, topic-centred narrative approach
- Operates from a perspective that knowledge is situated and contextual

Why choose qualitative interviewing?

- Let participants tell their own stories in their own terms
- Ontological position suggests people's knowledge, views, narratives, and experiences are meaningful.
- Epistemological position that talking to and interacting with people is a legitimate way to generate data.
- Resulting data is rich and detailed in understanding experiences from the perspective of the participant.

Developing the interview guide

- Draft interview questions that are linked to research questions
- Submit for ethics approval
- Test & revise the interview questions
- Write interview guide:
 - Instructions for interviewer
 - Preamble
 - Interview questions and themes
 - Notes
- Update ethics approval

Interview guide – themes and questions

Key Concepts:

- Collection descriptions
- Collector perspectives on the value of local music collections
- Community (contributors and users)
- Challenges

Planning



Finding Interviewees

- Research conducted by province using keyword searches and word of mouth
- Keywords: *local music collection, local music history, community music collection, music archive(s), music library*
- Word of Mouth - successfully found collections by discussing the project with potential interviewees and asking for suggestions

Organizing Interviews

- Email is our main form of communication
- Coordinating schedules across provinces required a lot of back-and-forth communication
- We organized the schedule using a spreadsheet and a Google Calendar to invite and share details with the participants, interviewer, and organizer

Data Collection & Management



Site visits by geographic representation

Province	Number of sites	Percentage of total
B.C.	6	33.3%
A.B.	6	33.3%
Q.C.	1	.05%
O.N.	5	27.7%
Total	18	100%

Site visits by institution type

Institution types

Radio station

5.6%

Museum

11.1%

Arts centre

11.1%

Folklore/traditional music

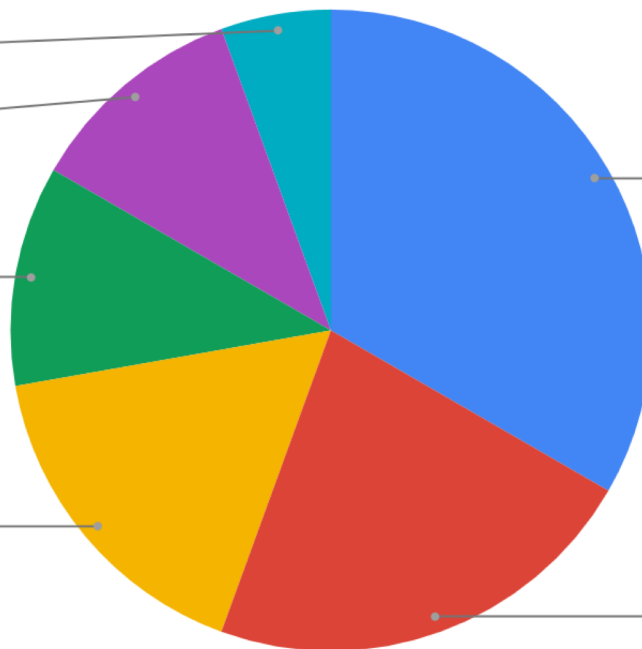
16.7%

Archive

33.3%

Library

22.2%



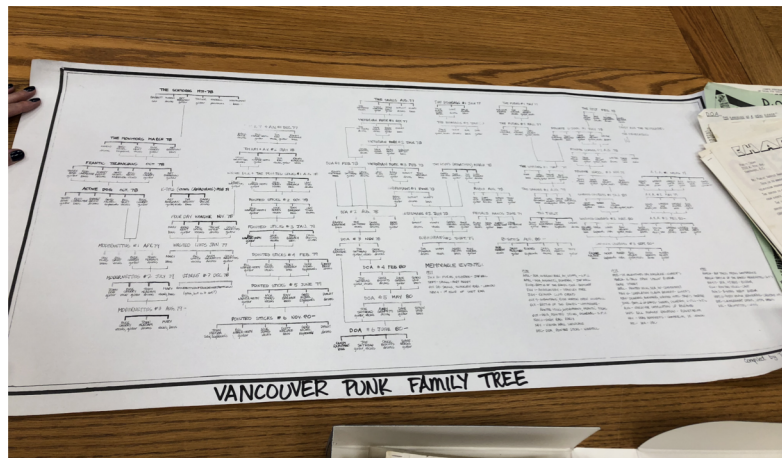
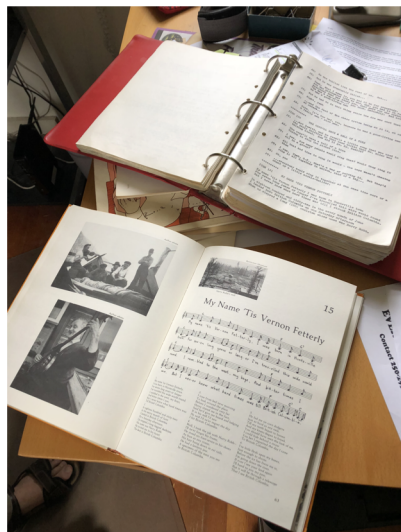
Interview preparation

- Basic background information on institution and participant
- Estimate travel time, identify location of interview
- Clarify interview purpose and outcomes
- Researcher should be highly familiar with the research questions, themes of investigation, and interview guide

Conducting the interview

- Start with informal conversation leading into the research topic.
- Use language of the participant.
- Avoid sharing your opinions and experiences as much as possible.
- Avoid using the interview as an opportunity to lapse into a role other than that of researcher.
- The participant is the teacher.
- You may not need to pose some or all of your questions.

Photo documentation



Data management

- Interviews are recorded and saved to secure data storage servers at the U of S.
- Recordings are sent to SSRL for transcription.
- Transcripts are shared with research team using Google Drive.

Anonymity

- Professional LIS literature airs on the side of caution, anonymizing to protect their interviewees' identities
- Scholarly literature is more lenient with anonymity, besides what is required by ethics, opting for direct & attributed quotes
- The distinction between literature types can be superficial as research in LIS often blurs the line between professional and scholarly
- All literature recognizes that the small sample sizes can not ensure anonymity, especially if using direct quotes or even summarized statements to support the research.

Analysis & Results

Content analysis

- Text coding is a way of searching for common themes and indexing these for easy retrieval, manipulation, and comparison.
- Expands the volume of data
- time consuming
- Software helps to catalogue, search, and retrieve, but cannot do the coding for the researcher
 - Paid products: NVivo, Dedoose, Quirkos, Dovetail

Why choose thematic analysis?

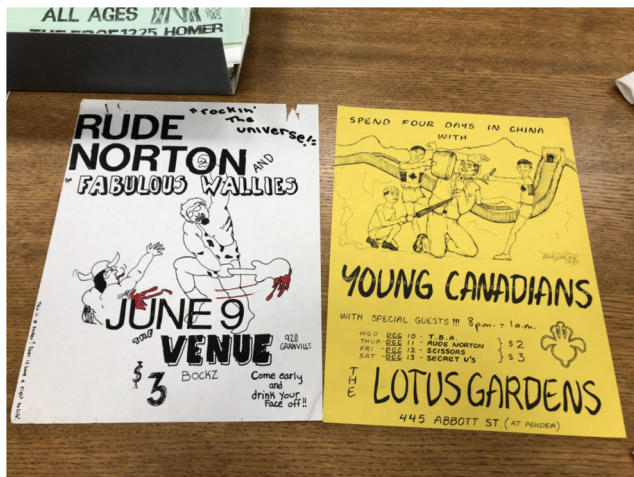
- Meaningful knowledge can be generated through cross-sectional thinking about themes that are coded across a data-set
- Become more familiar with the data by systematic scrutinization
- Helps the researcher to get a more comprehensive view
- Take stock of the data to decide whether to do further data sampling

Dedoose text analysis software

- Designed to support Qualitative and Mixed Methods research
- Web-based, allows for collaboration and access to materials from anywhere
- Interactive visualizations and analytics
- Export to your local machine and add to presentations and manuscripts
- \$12.95 USD/month per active user
- Small Group option (2-5 people)

Initial Findings

1. Local music is collected in a wide variety of cultural heritage organizations and often considered rare or on the verge of being lost
2. Collectors consider local music to be underrepresented in academic conversations
3. Collection managers work closely with or as a part of the local music community
4. Challenges include: funding, infrastructure, time, interest
5. Local music is seen as a critical piece of local history, highly valuable and unique.



“I’ve been working on bringing in posters from this fellow, his name was Perry the Poster Man, and he put up posters around Vancouver since 1978... he ended up with a quarter of a million posters which he then weeded down to 150,000 and they document like every aspect of Vancouver history in terms of events and cultures for the last 40 years. ...there’s also a fairly significant amount of posters relating to music shows. So punk rock, country, jazz, rock, and it can be like major bands that were coming to town or just like small local bands playing at a small venue. So the posters can either be very DIY, or big and glossy, expensive posters and such.”

Artifacts as evidence of local music cultures

“...part of the gathering of these oral histories was those secondary interviews could be somebody like Corb Lund who was influenced by Ian Tyson. So the primary interview would be with Ian, but then Corb would be talking about how he was influenced by Ian, and others. Wilf Carter, and others as well. I think that's that community aspect. It's not just this is what Ian Tyson did for music in Alberta and then it permeated beyond those borders.”

I: I guess is there anything that you think would make your work easier?

P: Obviously more money. So a streaming service, you know, something in-house, [a] streaming server would be great. Having a music librarian, someone who had collections development experience who can make calls. ...And a digitization lab would be also excellent.

Moving forward



Best practices

- Be open to changes in direction with the interview structure
- Let the interviewee guide the conversation - within reason
- Expect the unexpected
- Working with community = planning challenges
- Hire a RA!

Next Steps

- Upcoming presentation: IAML (summer 2019)
- Complete east coast interviews (late 2019-early 2020)
- Complete data analysis (spring 2020)
- Publication (spring – summer 2020)

Resources

Andy Bennett, "Popular Music and the 'Problem' of Heritage," in *Sites of Popular Music Heritage: Memories, Histories, Places*, Routledge Studies in Popular Music 4 (New York: Routledge, 2015), 24.

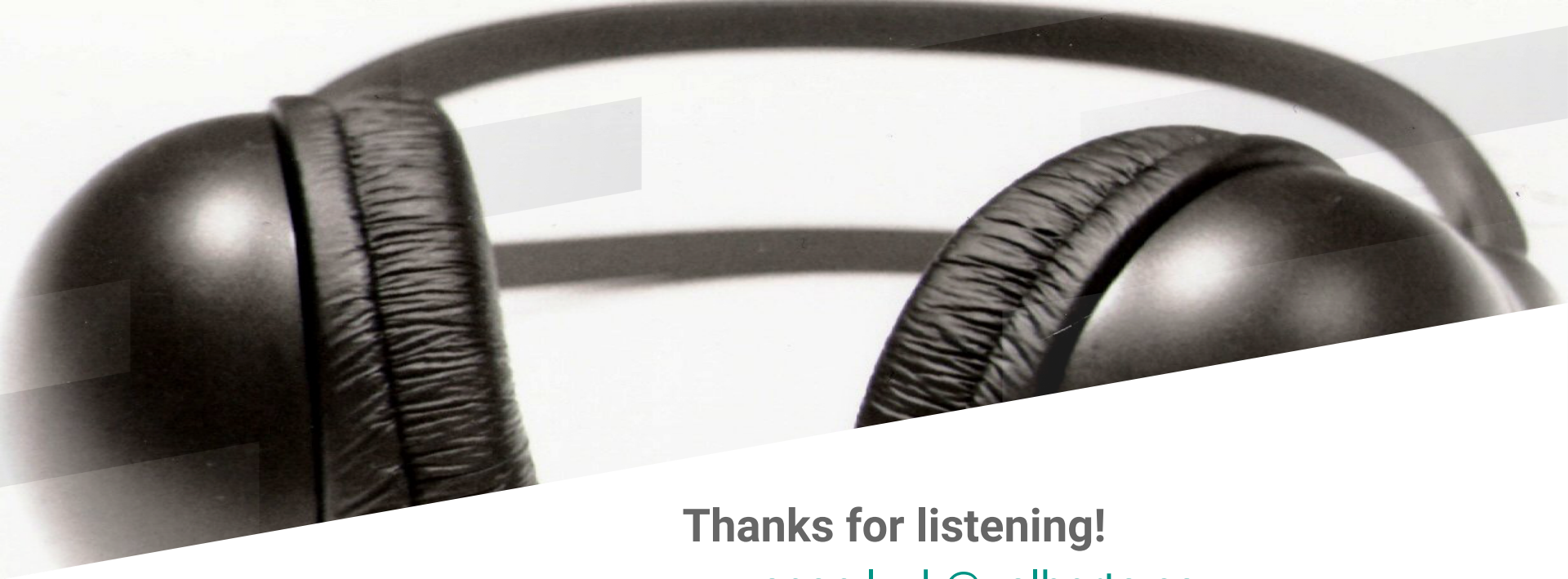
Burgess, R.G. *In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1984.

Epstein, Dena J. "On Collecting Materials for Local Music Histories." *Notes* 24, no. 1 (November 1967): 18–21. <https://doi.org/10.2307/894777>.

Kvale, Steinar, and Svend Brinkmann. *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Third edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2015.

Mason, Jennifer. *Qualitative Researching*. London: SAGE, 2018.

<http://sundog.usask.ca/record=4394292>.



Thanks for listening!

- sean.luyk@ualberta.ca
- carolyn.doi@usask.ca

<https://research-groups.usask.ca/soundsofhome/>